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September 5, 1996

Deterrence, Punishment, Revenge

[Notes:

relations of deterrence/prevention; punishment;

punishment as justice

as revenge

as deterrent

as reeducation, cure, rehabilitation

as scapegoating

to unify community, unanimity minus one

to placate gods, win gods' favor (after communal transgression, that has lost their favor: as revealed by calamity, seeing calamity as "punishment," i.e., as something that could have been avoided by proper behavior, i.e., as consistent with community and citizen's being in control of what befalls them, as being within a system of "justice" and predictability and control, both individual welfare and community welfare.

to feel secure, confident of future, not fearful of what will happen next (gods are satisfied)

to feel better, work off feelings of anger (at injustice, harm, impotence, low-status, low self-esteem, insignificance, out of control...)

Hyp: acceptance of deterrence (hostage-taking, hostage-destroying, potentiality of hostage-threatening (i.e., having and revealing an ability to take hostages, to threaten them imminently and specifically: by possessing nuclear weapons, testing them, avowing doctrine and training and alert...)

is based on acceptance of, and experience of, punishment, as a legitimate tool in child-training/rearing/educating/socializing (one's responsibility as a parent, to child and to society, as well as for the good of the child, one's own convenience/well-being/and ability to accept and love child and to feel obligations to it)

and in adult relations

to friend? questionable; note this

to "criminal" (and see scapegoating)

to "unfaithful, treacherous" lover/spouse, who has aroused jealousy (note that this is less calculating--though it may appear in consciousness so--than as an out-of-control, compulsive, response to an "overwhelming emotion" of jealousy, rage, hatred, toward lover, rage and hatred toward lover's lover, the "seducer" of one's lover...

People "know" that punishment was good, necessary, for one's children and oneself, and that it "did no harm to me, was good for me."

(Even those who think the opposite about their own experience, are all the more likely to inflict punishment on others and children, when they are adults).

Thus, doing "harm" to a child (like, an animal!) is thought to be not only not-harmful (if in context of punishment, education, and done consistently with this purpose: with explanation, immediately, not disproportionately, otherwise accompanied by love or at least justice, predictability, on basis of reasonable rules)

but positively good, even necessary, obligatory, "tough love."

Related goals:

to show our own "seriousness, concern," strength of our demand that rules be obeyed;

to demonstrate to world, allies and other potential transgressors our readiness and will and ability to be "the enforcer, the world's policeman"

to "get their attention, focus them (on one's reasonable demands, on their transgressions, on their need for self-control and change to compliance..."

This is the "two-by-four between the eyes" (of the stubborn, balky mule; the explanation given at the National Teach-in in Washington in spring 1965 by a major accompanying me, to explain the purpose of the Rolling Thunder campaign;

[The same "two-by-four" image was used, without explanation, in past week to explain Clinton's sending two waves of cruise missiles against Iraq, to get Saddam to withdraw from Erbil (success claimed today because Saddam has withdrawn "most" of this force, although

He was already withdrawing, and had clearly intended only a short-term occupation, to force out Patriotic Party (and

arrest and kill some Patriotic Front officials)

He has left enough tanks to continue to control northern area.

Clinton doesn't want Kurdish independence, especially associated with or supported by Iran (both of these the position of the Patriotic Front, the attack on which we are "punishing")

Clinton opposes the de facto alliance of Democratic Front (Barzani) with Iraq : Barzani also wants independence, in principle, but accepts de facto collaboration with Saddam;

Thus, Clinton opposes both Kurdish independence from Iraq, Kurdish collaboration with Iraq (Barzani actually invited Saddam into Erbil, thereby undercutting charges that Saddam was aggressing or breaking any commitment or defying any UN demand), or any Kurdish help from Iran (to defy Saddam).

All that is acceptable from Kurds is dependence on US for a limited autonomy, not independence (which would arouse fears in Turkey, dismember Iraq to the possible benefit of Iran and of Shiites in Iraw which would also benefit Iran and would arouse fears in Saudi Arabia).

We don't want Patriotic Front to succeed, but we are punishing Saddam for using force in suppressing Patriotic Front at request of other half of Kurds, i.e., apparently we don't want PF to be suppressed or destroyed, either.

We don't want Barzani to succeed (in independence) or to accept full Saddam sponsorship, or, presumably, to be fully suppressed by Saddam. We regard it as "success" (this, then, is what we wanted to achieve by strikes) if Saddam withdraws troops but continues to control area with tanks...

This leaves as sole real purpose of strikes: to announce willingness to punish violently (someone, something) and to claim success with it and a reasonable, moderate, readiness to terminate operations (with no American losses, no escalation, no endless operations): all this, just before an election, just after being charged with being soft on Iraq by war-hero Dole (who has to back-track and support "troops", if not Clinton: like Goldwater in August 1964.

What is the Clinton Administration planning secretly with respect to Bosnia right after election, given that everyone says that it would be wrong to withdraw US troops?

Will the lesson of Vietnam be followed--don't prolong or escalate ground involvement, honor election pledge to withdraw or

limit involvement (what LBJ should have done in 1964-65)?

Or the example of US behavior in Vietnam: lie on limitations to win election, then "pursue US national security interests, promote stability and world order" by prolonging and escalating ground involvement (with approval of most Establishment) immediately after election?]

The acceptance of "punishment" prepares society for the acceptance of "deterrence" (even, by threat of harm to vast masses of innocents, terrorism, hostage-taking. Illogic of this appears when harm is global, irreversible: yet 1/3--1/2 of Americans would accept this "retaliation" for SU surprise attack, even for SU attack on US military and C3 which spared cities. Need to "carry out threat, maintain credibility, punish, revenge" is equivalent to, as illogical as, Goering's feeling of need to carry out Hitler's orders for scorched earth, in the face of imminent defeat (not like Russian scorched earth in face of German advance, both against Napoleon and against Hitler), lest "anarchy" result from disobedience. Goering exhibiting inflexibility, disregard of circumstances and prospects, inappropriate "persistence".

All this contradicts Socrates' argument against "repaying a debt of harm against an evil enemy who has done harm." Doing harm reduces the adversary's inclination or ability to be just, to act justly. To bring this about is to be unjust, and to go against one's own interests (to be unreasonable, irrational). It is not like punishing a child? In fact, Socrates implies that one should not do harm, in punishment, to a horse or dog either: it makes them worse, not better, in terms of their qualities as an animal.

(Yet punishment is used in training an animal, at least these "domesticable" animals; is this because they are not given to revenge, but rather, are "borne to be subordinate, servile, toward humans"? In this they differ from lions and tigers: one uses physical punishment toward these at one's long-term peril. They have more "pride" (as in pride of lions!), "honor," resistance to being "tamed."

Even an absolute rule like "don't ever take hostages" has practical exceptions. Suppose a terrorist (ignore "justice" of their cause! or desire for revenge, or desperation as in case of country whose famine was being ignored: Joanna expects this to arise within 5-10 years) is credibly threatening a city:

and one had a chance to take his close relatives as hostages, for counter-threats. This would probably not work (see attempt, in *The Usual Suspects*, to blackmail "the big terrorist": he kills his wife and children, then hunts down his opponents and

kills them and all their relatives). But how many would refuse to try? See messages of movie plots. See Heat (on revenge, hostages...honor/respect...) (See Crimson Tide, on hostage-threatening...)

Thus, nuclear deterrence.

Yet actual Manhattan Project was not directed at German bomb, but at use against Germany, against Japan, against Russia, against world (Churchill, USAF)!

If purpose is really to deter, preparations for terrorism should be accompanied by many other efforts; if these are not made, we must suspect that is not the real, or effective purpose; and without this intention, the terrorism, or threats and preparation for it, cannot be regarded as justified, or otherwise than as forbidden and evil. ^{regarded}

This has always been the case with nuclear "deterrence," and with its policy context.

Might there be hypothetical circumstances in which nuclear detrence was justified? Yes--as with absolutely everything.

But this has never been the case (certainly for US, UK, France; what of others? Not, in full policy context); so we should be skeptical of current claims, or of likelihood that this will be the case, ever, in the future.

I.e., knowledge of actual motives and circumstances does not contradict the "ignorant observer, alien intelligence" conclusion that this policy is mad, evil, doomed.

If we entertain hyp. that the declared aim / purpose of X is not its "real" or main purpose (if at all). Then we look to see if other things are being done that would serve, or be essential to, this purpose: and find none (probably the contrary). This supports, probably confirms, the hypothesis.